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Description

The present invention relates to a system and a method for deriving the position of a receiver system by using spread spectrum signals transmitted by satellites and made of a repeating pulse epoch. Such satellites are generally the ones as used in the NAVSTAR global positioning system (GPS/ NAVSTAR). The spread spectrum signals generally use a gold code.

There is presently under development a position detection system, referred to as NAVSTAR Global Positioning System, wherein a constellation of eighteen orbiting satellites transmit pseudo-random ranging signals (hereafter referred to as "PRN signals") from which users with appropriate equipment can obtain three-dimentional location, velocity and timing information anywhere on or near the surface of the Earth. The details of the NAVSTAR/GPS are given in "NAVIGATION", Journal of the Institute of Navigation, Volume 25, Number 2, December, 1978. In this system which will eventually be put into operation, the eighteen satellites will be deployed in circular 10,900-nautical-mile orbits in three mutually-inclined planes. A minimum of four satellites will be in twelve-hours orbits and the position of each satellite at any time will be precisely known. The longitude, latitude and altitude of any point close to Earth, with respect of the center of the Earth can be calculated from the propagation times of electromagnetic signals from four of the satellites to that point.

A signal about a single center frequency from each visible satellite will be received by a user terminal at a point close to Earth to measure propagation times of the electromagnetic signals transmitted by the satellites. The satellites from which the signals originate are identified by modulating the signal transmitted from each satellite with pseudo-random coded signals. The GPS system will operate in two modes simultaneouly. In one mode, referred to as the clear-acquisition (C/A) mode, the PRN signal is a Gold code sequence that is repeated once every millisecond to enable the position of the receiver responsive to the signal transmitted from four of the satellites to be determined to an accuracy of 100 meters. In a second mode, referred to as the precise or protected (P) mode, pseudo-random codes are transmitted with sequences that are 7-days long, enabling the user terminal position to be determined to an accuracy of better than 10 meters.

It should be noted that, throughout the following disclosure, the word "Gold code" generally means the PRN signal used in C/A mode but may also refer to the pseudo-random code used in P mode.

When computing the user terminal position, the receiver will operate in three modes, viz, signal acquisition, signal tracking and position fixing. In the acquisition mode, the receiver must know, approximately, its location and have available a recent version of the GPS almanac. For acquisition, Doppler estimates must then be computed for the subset of GPS satellites with the best geometry, i.e., the four satellites with the greatest elevation, typically above 20° as observed by the given terminal. This leaves the GPS demodulator with a GPS carrier frequency uncertainty of several hundred hertz. For the receiver to generate locally a carrier reference to this accuracy, however, requires an oven-stabilized L-Band synthesizer. To enable the receiver to separate the C/A signals received from the different satellites, the receiver also contains a number of different Gold code reference sources corresponding to the number of satellites in the constellation. The locally derived code and carrier references are cross-correlated with received GPS signals over one or more Gold code sequence intervals. The receiver shifts the phase of the locally derived Gold code sequence on a chip-by-chip basis and within each chip in 0.5-1.0 microsecond steps, spanning one millisecond code periods for the C/A code until the maximum cross-correlation is obtained. The chipping rate of a pseudo-random sequence is the rate at which the individual pulses in the sequence are derived and therefore is equal to the code repetition rate divided by the number of chips in the code. Each pulse in the code is referred to as a chip.

In the tracking mode, code delay is tracked continuously and an aligned or "punctual" code stream is generated. This is implemented with either a delay lock loop or by means of the tau-dither technique. In either case, the result is a continuously tracked code generator with delay error on the order of 0.1 microsecond. Secondly, initial Doppler uncertainty must be further reduced. This is done by stepping the frequency synthesizer and measuring the correlator output. Once the Doppler uncertainty is reduced to 10-20 Hz, the carrier phase and the raw GPS data messages are recovered using a Costas loop and the aforementioned punctual code.

After four locally derived Gold code sequences are locked in phase with the Gold code sequences received from the satellites in the field of view of the receiver, the position, velocity and time associated with the receiver as well as other variables of interest can, upon further local processing of the GPS data messages, be determined. Position accuracy may be obtained to about 100 meters. This data processing requires storage in the terminal of ephemeris parameters, updated hourly, together with a software model for the GPS satellite orbits, to allow computation in real time of satellite coordinates for correspondence with

time of arrival of GPS satellite-generated pseudo-range data.

In such GPS receivers, the Gold code sequence transmitted by the different satellites are arranged so that a maximum cross-correlation product between any two of them is about 65, whereas the autocorrelation product of an internal Gold code generator which produces the local Gold code sequence and the Gold code sequence transmitted from one of the satellite is 1023. The correlation value is defined, for this purpose, as the number of identical bits in a 1023-bit epoch of a Gold code sequence. When the phase of a local Gold code generator is adjusted so that the maximum cross-correlation value is derived, the locally derived Gold code sequence has the same phase as the Gold code sequence that is coupled to the receiver, whereby the time of the local code can be used to help derive the position of the receiver.

The GPS receivers use conventional delay-locked loops to adjust the phase of the local Gold code generator. A delay-locked loop comprises a correlation circuit, a phase error derivation circuit, a voltage-controlled oscillator and the local Gold code generator. The correlation circuit produces a correlation output when the local Gold code sequence from the local Gold code generator correlates well with the Gold code sequence from the satellite. The phase error derivation circuit responds to this correlation output by outputting a phase error signal. The voltage-controlled oscillator is controlled by a clock signal with a variable oscillation frequency related to the phase error signal. This holds the two Gold codes in phase.

In such conventional GPS receivers, since the controlling oscillator in a loop which controls the local Gold code generator based on the phase error between the Gold code sequence received from the satellite and the local Gold code derived by the local Gold code generator, which loop will be referred to as the "PN-locking loop", is made up of analog circuitry, such as a voltage-controlled oscillator, it prevents full integration of the circuitry of the GPS receiver. Therefore, it is desired to implement the PN-locking loop solely in digital circuitry. In such digital circuitry, a numerically controlled oscillator (NCO) may be employed. However, if an NCO were employed in the PN-locking loop, delicate control of the local Gold code generator would be impossible. For instance, assuming the oscillation frequency of the NCO is f_s, phase control at a precision finer than $1/f_s$ would be impossible.

A method for deriving the position of a receiver system from a spread spectrum signal transmitted by a satellite and made of a repeating pulse epoch is disclosed by P.C. Ould and R. J. VanWechel in an article "All-Digital GPS Receiver Mechanization", published in NAVIGATION, Vol. 28, No. 3, Fall 1981, pages 178 - 182. This method comprises the following steps:

- receiving said spread spectrum signals (S_{IN});
- generating a local spread spectrum signal (S_{PN}) made of a repeating pulse epochs, said local signal matching the spread spectrum signal from a satellite;
- comparing said spread spectrum signal (S_{IN}) from said satellite with said locally generated signal (S_{PN}), and producing a correlation signal (S_1) when correlation therebetween is established.

The related receiver system comprises means for performing these steps.

In the just mentioned method and system, the sampling frequency used for the spread spectrum signals is approximately two samples per code chip, but is not synchronous with the chip frequency. This decreases the phase error against the phase error as obtained in the above discussed case.

It is the object of the present invention to provide a system and a method for deriving the position of a receiver from signals broadcast by satellites, which system and method have highly accurate synchronization and propagation time measurement.

The method of the present invention comprises the steps as listed above in discussion of the mentioned article, and it is characterized in that it further comprises the steps of:

- deriving the average phase error, in response to said correlation signal, between said spread spectrum signal from said satellite and said locally generated signal over predetermined periods of time matching the pulse epoch intervals of the spread spectrum signals, and producing an average phase error signal;
- adjusting the phase of said locally generated spread spectrum signal so as to reduce said phase error on the basis of said phase error signal; and
- deriving a basic propagation time value of said spread spectrum signal measured between the known time at which a given epoch pulse is transmitted from said satellite and the timing of the corresponding epoch pulse of said locally generated spread spectrum signal, and for correcting said basic propagation time value based on said average phase error signal value, on the value of the predetermined periods of time and on the value of the corresponding periods of time of the locally generated signal, to derive a correct propagation time, and thereafter derive the distance of said receiver system (10) from said satellite.

The receiver system of the present invention comprises means for performing these steps.

Deriving the average phase error over the predetermined period of time makes it possible to derive precisely the phase error between the gold code sequence from the satellite and the gold code sequence supplied by the local gold code generator.

The present invention will be understood more fully from the detailed description given here below and from the accompanying drawings of the preferred embodiment of the present invention, which, however, should not be taken to limit the invention to the specific embodiment but are for explanation and understanding only.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of the preferred embodiment of a PN-locking loop in a GPS receiver according to the present invention; and

Fig. 2 is an explanatory chart showing the relationship between the Gold code sequence from a satellite and a local Gold code derived by a local Gold code generator in the PN-locking loop of Fig. 1.

Referring now to the drawings, particularly to Fig. 1, a GPS receiver 10 has a looped circuit including a correlation circuit 12, a band-pass filter 14, a phase-error derivation circuit 16, a numerically controlled oscillator 18 and an internal or local Gold code generator 20. The local Gold code generator 20 generates a local Gold code sequence S_{PN} made up of repeating epochs at known intervals, which local Gold code sequence will be hereafter referred to as the "local code". The local Gold code sequence matches a Gold code sequence S_{IN} received from a satellite, which will be hereafter refereed to as the "satellite code". The correlation circuit 12 comprises a multiplier which receives both the satellite code S_{IN} and the local code S_{PN} for correlation thereof. The correlation circuit 12 produces a correlation output S_1 when correlation between the satellite code and the local code is established.

The phase-error derivation circuit 16 responds to the correlation output S_1 from the correlation circuit 12 by deriving the magnitude $\Delta\phi$ of phase error between the satellite code S_{IN} and the local code S_{PN}. The phase-error derivation circuit 16 outputs a phase-error signal $S_{\Delta\phi}$ to the numerically controlled oscillator 18. The oscillation frequency f_s of a clock signal generated by the numerically controlled oscillator 18 is controlled on the basis of the phase-error signal. The clock controls the phase of the local Gold code generator 20. This holds the satellite code S_{IN} and the local code S_{PN} in phase.

Under phase-locked conditions, the epoch of the satellite code, which repeats at regular intervals, is sent to a propagation time measuring circuit 22. The propagation time measuring circuit 22 derives a propagation time value based on the delay of the epoch of the satellite code relative to the epoch of the local code.

According to the preferred embodiment of the GPS receiver according to the present invention, the phase-error derivation circuit 16 is digital. Therefore, in order to make the correlation output S_1 of the correlation circuit 12 transmitted through the band-pass filter 14 applicable to the digital phase-error derivation circuit 16, an analog-to-digital (A/D) converter 24 is installed between the band-pass filter 14 and the phase-error derivation circuit 16.

The phase-error derivation circuit 16 derives a value indicative of the phase error $\Delta\phi$ between the satellite code S_{IN} and the local code S_{PN}. The phase-error derivation circuit 16 integrates the phase-error indicative values over one epoch cycle $TE2_N$ of the satellite code to derive an average phase error value $\overline{\Delta\phi_N}$ and produce a corresponding average phase-error signal $S_{\Delta\phi}$. The phase-error derivation circuit 16 sends the average phase-error signal $S_{\Delta\phi}$ to the numerically controlled oscillator 18. Derivation circuit 16 has an internal clock generator which outputs a sampling clock SCLK to the A/D converter 24. The frequency of the sampling clock SCLK is selected to be sufficiently high to enable the A/D converter 24 to convert the correlation output S_1 of the correlation circuit 12 into a digital signal.

The numerically controlled oscillator 18 receives a clock f_s which has a frequency of 40 nsec. for example. The numerically controlled oscillator 18 derives a pulse rate based on the average phase-error signal $S_{\Delta\phi}$ and produces a clock S_{CL} with the derived pulse rate. The phase of the local code S_{PN} produced by generator 20 is controlled by the clock S_{CL} from the numerically controlled oscillator 18. The local Gold code generator 20 produces each epoch EP_i (EP_{N-1},EP_N....) of the local code. Upon generating each epoch, the local Gold code generator 20 outputs a timing signal TIM to the propagation measuring circuit 22.

The propagation time measuring circuit 22 also receives the clock f_s and the phase-error signal $S_{\Delta\phi}$ besides the timing signal TIM and derives the propagation time at every occurence of the epoch, i.e. every 1 msec.

The propagation time derivation process performed by the propagation time measuring circuit 22 will be descibed herebelow with reference to Fig. 2. In Fig. 2, Fig. 2(A) shows the transmission timing of the Gold code S in the satellite. The Gold code S is made up of epochs EP_{N-1}, EP_N... repeating at known intervals. e.g. 1 msec. The satellite code S_{IN} (Fig. 2(B) is received by the GPS receiver 10 after a propagation time $TPD1_{N-1}$, $TPD1_N$...

The GPS receiver 10 controls the phase of the local Gold code generator 20 so that the phase of the local code S_{PN} (Fig. 2(c) approaches the phase of the satellite code S_{PN} to the extent possible. However, due to the limit of phase-error adjustment in the numerially controlled oscillator 18, the phase of the local code S_{PN} cannot be adjusted relative to the satellite code S_{IN} beyond the resolution of the clock frequency f_s. Therefore, the local code S_{PN} is still subject to a slight phase error $\Delta\phi_{N-1}$, $\Delta\phi_N$ relative to the satellite code.

The difference between phase errors $\Delta\phi_{N-1}$, $\Delta\phi_N$ at the measuring points N-1 and N at which epochs in the sattelite code start can be expressed by the following equation:

$$\Delta\phi_{N-1} - \Delta\phi_N = TE_1 - TE_2 \quad (1)$$

where TE_1 is the interval between the epochs EP_{N-1} and EP_N of the satellite code S_{IN}; and
TE_2 is the interval between the epochs EP_{N-1} and EP_N of the local code S_{PN}.

Assume that the phase errors vary linearly. Since the interval TE_0 between the epochs EP_{N-1} and EP_N of the Gold code S generated by the satellite is 1 msec., the average phase-error $\overline{\Delta\phi_N}$ can be expressed as:

$$\overline{\Delta\phi_N} = (\Delta\phi_{N-1} + \Delta\phi_N)/2 \quad (2)$$

From the foregoing equations (1) and (2), the phase-error $\Delta\phi_N$ can be calculated by:

$$\Delta\phi_N = \overline{\Delta\phi_N} + (TE_{2N} - TE_1)/2 \quad (3)$$

Therefore, by subtracting the phase error $\Delta\phi_N$ derived from the equation (3) from the propagation time TPD_{2N} which is measured by counting clock pulses f_s, the actual propagation time TPD_1 can be obtained from the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} TPD_{1N} &= TPD_{2N} - \overline{\Delta\phi_N} \\ &= TPD_{2N} - \Delta\phi_N - (TE_{2N} - TE_1)/2 \quad \ldots \quad (4) \end{aligned}$$

Accordingly, the propagation time deriving circuit 24 solves formula (4) in order to derive the actual propagation time TPD_{1N}. The propagation time deriving circuit 24 counts the clock pulse f_s from the known timing at which the epoch EP_N is transmitted from the satellite until the timing signal TIM from the local Gold code generator 20, in order to measure the propagation time TPD_{2N}. At the same time, the propagation time deriving circuit 24 counts the clock pulse f_s in response to the timing signal TIM to derive the epoch cycle TE_{2N}.

Since the numerically controlled oscillator 18 controls the phase of the Gold code S_{PN} in response to the clock f_s, the timing signal TIM can be produced in synchronism with timing of the clock f_s. Therefore, there cannot be an error between the propagation time TPD_{2N} and the epoch cycle TE_{2N}.

The propagation time deriving circuit 24 also receives the average phase-error signal $S_{\Delta\phi}$ from the phase-error derivation circuit 16, as set forth above. In the shown embodiment, since the epoch cycle of the satellite code S_{IN} will never fluctuate significantly, the epoch cycle TE_1 may be regarded as being constant.

As will be appreciated herefrom, according to the shown embodiment, an accurate propagation time value TPD_{1N} can be obtained by solving formula (4).

On the other hand, the numerically controlled oscillator 18 is responsive to the average phase-error signal $S_{\Delta\phi}$ from the phase-error derivation circuit 16 to adjust its pulse frequency so that the local code S_{PN} and the satellite code S_{IN} can be held in phase.

The preferred embodiment of the GPS receiver makes the accuracy of the derived propagation time value TPD_{1N} substantially higher than $\pm 1/f_s$, since, as a first fact, the propagation time TPD_{2N} and the epoch cycle TE_{2N} can be measured by counting the clock pulse f_s without error. In addition, since the epoch cycle TE_1 of the satellite code S_I has substantially no quantization error, the constant value can be used in the foregoing calculations of the actual propagation time without causing any problems. Furthermore, correction of the propagation time by reference to the average phase error between the satellite code and the local code allows digital circuits to be used in the GPS receiver without degrading accuracy of measurement.

The use of digital IC circuits for deriving phase-error and controlling the local Gold code generator lowers the production costs significantly.

It should be noted that, although the shown embodiment has assumed the epoch cycle of the satellite code to be constant, it would be possible to correct the epoch cycle TE_1 of the satellite code S_{IN} by detecting the chip frequency of the satellite code and deriving a correction value based on the chip frequency detected by the phase-error derivation circuit. After correcting for the epoch cycle of the satellite code, the influence of Doppler shift is fully eliminated.

Therefore, the present invention fulfills all of the objects and advantages sought therefor.

Claims

1. A receiver system (10) for deriving the position of said receiver system from spread spectrum signals broadcast by satellites and made of a repeating pulse epoch, said system comprising:
   - means for receiving said spread spectrum signals (SI_N);
   - means (20) for generating a local spread spectrum signal (S_{PN}) matching said spread spectrum signal from a satellite and being made of a repeating pulse epoch, said local signal matching said signal from said satellite;
   - means (12) for correlating said spread spectrum signal (S_{IN}) from said satellite with said locally generated signal (S_{PN}) and for producing a correlation signal (S_1) when correlation therebetween is established;

   the system being characterized in that it comprises:
   - means (16) responsive to said correlation signal from said correlating means (12) for deriving the average phase error between said spread spectrum signal (S_{IN}) from said satellite and said locally generated signal (S_{PN}) over predetermined periods of time matching the pulse epoch intervalls of the spread spectrum signals, and for producing an average phase error signal;
   - means (18) responsive to said average phase error signal for controlling said local spread spectrum signal generating means to adjust the phase of said locally generated spread spectrum signal so as to reduce said phase error; and
   - means (24) for deriving a basic propagation time value of said spread spectrum signal measured between a known timing at which a given epoch pulse is transmitted from said satellite and the timing of the corresponding epoch pulse of said locally generated spread spectrum signal, and for correcting said basic propagation time value based on said average phase error signal value, on the value of said predetermined periods of time, and on the value of the corresponding periods of time of the locally generated signal to derive a correct propagation time, and thereafter deriving the distance of said receiver system from said satellite.

2. The receiver system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said means (18) for controlling said internal spread spectrum signal generating means comprises a digital circuit.

3. The receiver system as set forth in claim 2, wherein said means (16) for deriving said average phase-error comprises a digital circuit.

4. The receiver system as set forth in claim 3, wherein said means (18) for controlling said internal spread spectrum signal generating means comprises a numerically controlled oscillator.

5. The receiver system as set forth in claim 4, which further comprises a clock generator (18) and said means for controlling said local spread spectrum signal generating means controls the pulse frequency of a clock signal generated by said clock generator for controlling the phase of said locally generated spread spectrum signal.

6. A method for deriving the position of a receiver system (10) from spread spectrum signals transmitted by satellites and made of a repeating pulse epoch; said method comprising the steps of:
   - receiving said spread spectrum signals (S_{IN});
   - generating a local spread spectrum signal (S_{PN}) made of repeating pulse epochs, said local signal matching the spread spectrum signal from a satellite;
   - comparing said spread spectrum signal (S_{IN}) from said satellite with said locally generated signal (S_{PN}), and producing a correlation signal (S_1) when correlation therebetween is established;

   the method being characterized in the following steps:

- deriving the average phase error, in response to said correlation signal, between said spread spectrum signal from said satellite and said locally generated signal over predetermined periods of time matching the pulse epoch intervals of the spread spectrum signals, and producing an average phase error signal;
- adjusting the phase of said locally generated spread spectrum signal so as to reduce said phase error on the basis of said phase error signal; and
- deriving a basic propagation time value of said spread spectrum signal measured between the known time at which a given epoch pulse is transmitted from said satellite and the timing of the corresponding epoch pulse of said locally generated spread spectrum signal, and for correcting said basic propagation time value based on said average phase error signal value, on the value of said predetermined periods of time and on the value of the corresponding periods of time of the locally generated signal, to derive a correct propagation time, and thereafter derive the distance of said receiver system (10) from said satellite.

7. The method as set forth in claim 6, wherein said step of controlling the phase of said internal spread spectrum signal is performed by means of a digital circuit.

8. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein said step of deriving said average phase-error is performed by a digital circuit.

9. The method as set forth in claim 8, wherein said step of controlling the phase of said internal spread spectrum signal is performed by a numerically controlled oscillator.

Patentansprüche

1. Empfängersystem (10), dessen Position aus Spread-Spektrum-Signalen ermittelbar ist, die von Satelliten aus übertragen werden und aus einer Wiederholimpulsepoche bestehen, welches System folgendes aufweist:
   - eine Einrichtung zum Empfangen der Spread-Spektrum-Signale (S_{IN});
   - eine Einrichtung (20) zum Erzeugen eines örtlichen Spread-Spektrum-Signals (S_{PN}), das mit dem Spread-Spektrum-Signal von einem Satelliten übereinstimmt und aus einer Wiederholimulsepoche besteht, welches örtliche Signal mit dem Signal vom Satelliten übereinstimmt;
   - eine Einrichtung (12) zum Korrelieren des Spread-Spektrum-Signals (S_{IN}) vom Satelliten mit dem örtlich erzeugten Signal (S_{PN}) und zum Erzeugen eines Korrelationssignals (S_1), wenn Korrelation zwischen den beiden hergestellt ist;
   - wobei das System **dadurch gekennzeichnet** ist, daß es folgendes aufweist:
   - eine Einrichtung (16), die auf das Korrelationssignal von der Korreliereinrichtung (12) anspricht, um den mittleren Phasenfehler zwischen dem Spread-Spektrum-Signal (S_{IN}) vom Satelliten und dem örtlich erzeugten Signal (S_{PN}) über vorbestimmte Zeitspannen zu bestimmen, die mit den Impulsepochenintervallen der Spread-Spektrum-Signale übereinstimmen, und zum Erzeugen eines Signals für den mittleren Phasenfehler;
   - eine Einrichtung (18), die auf das Signal für den mittleren Phasenfehler anspricht, um die Erzeugungseinrichtung für das örtliche Spread-Spektrum-Signal zu steuern, um die Phase dieses örtlich erzeugten Spread-Spektrum-Signals so einzustellen, daß der Phasenfehler verringert ist; und
   - eine Einrichtung (24) zum Bestimmen eines Grund-Laufzeitwerts für das Spread-Spektrum-Signal, gemessen zwischen einem bekannten Zeitpunkt, zu dem eine gegebene Impulsepoche vom Satelliten gesendet wird, und dem Zeitpunkt der entsprechenden Impulsepoche des örtlich erzeugten Spread-Spektrum-Signals, und zum Korrigieren dieses Grund-Laufzeitwerts auf Grundlage des Signalwerts für den mittleren Phasenfehler, des Wertes für die vorbestimmten Zeitspannen und des Wertes der entsprechenden Zeitspannen des örtlich erzeugten Signals, um eine genaue Laufzeit zu bestimmen und um dadurch den Abstand des Empfängersystems vom Satelliten zu bestimmen.

2. Empfängersystem nach Anspruch 1, bei dem die Einrichtung (18) zum Steuern der Erzeugungseinrichtung für das interne Spread-Spektrum-Signal eine digitale Schaltung aufweist.

3. Empfängersystem nach Anspruch 2, bei dem die Einrichtung (16) zum Bestimmen des mittleren Phasenfehlers eine digitale Schaltung aufweist.

4. Empfängersystem nach Anspruch 3, bei dem Einrichtung (18) zum Steuern der Erzeugungseinrichtung für das interne Spread-Spektrum-Signal einen numerisch gesteuerten Oszillator aufweist.

5. Empfängersystem nach Anspruch 4, das ferner einen Taktgenerator (18) aufweist und bei dem die Einrichtung zum Steuern der Erzeugungseinrichtung für das örtliche Spread-Spektrum-Signal die Impulsfrequenz eines Taktsignals steuert, das vom Taktgenerator erzeugt wird, um die Phase des örtlich erzeugten Spread-Spektrum-Signals einzustellen.

6. Verfahren zum Bestimmen der Position eines Empfängersystems (10) aus Spread-Spektrum-Signalen, wie sie von Satelliten übertragen werden und aus Wiederholungsimpulsepochen bestehen; welches Verfahren die folgenden Schritte aufweist:
   - Empfangen der Spread-Spektrum-Signale (S_{IN});
   - Erzeugen eines örtlichen Spread-Spektrum-SignalS (S_{PN}) aus Wiederholungsimpulsepochen, welches örtliche Signal mit dem Spread-Spektrum-Signal von einem Satelliten übereinstimmt;
   - Vergleichen des Spread-Spektrum-SignalS (S_{IN}) vom Satelliten mit dem örtlich erzeugten Signal (S_{PN}), und Erzeugen eines Korrelationssignals (S_1), wenn Korrelation zwischen diesen hergestellt ist;
   - wobei das Verfahren durch die folgenden Schritte gekennzeichnet ist:
   - Bestimmen des mittleren Phasenfehlers, auf das Korrelationssignal hin, zwischen dem Spread-Spektrum-Signal vom Satelliten und dem örtlich erzeugten Signal über vorbestimmte Zeitspannen, die mit den Impulsepochenintervallen der Spread-Spektrum-Signale übereinstimmen, und Erzeugen eines Signals für den mittleren Phasenfehler;
   - Einstellen der Phase des örtlich erzeugten Spread-Spektrum-Signals, um den Phasenfehler auf Grundlage des Phasenfehlersignals zu verringern; und
   - Bestimmen eines Grund-Laufzeitwerts für das Spread-Spektrum-Signal, wie er zwischen dem bekannten Zeitpunkt, zu dem eine bekannte Impulsepoche von einem Satelliten gesendet wird, und dem Zeitpunkt der entsprechenden Impulsepoche des örtlich erzeugten Spread-Spektrum-Signals gemessen wird, und Korrigieren dieses Grund-Laufzeitwerts auf Grundlage des Signalwerts für den mittleren Phasenfehler, des Werts für die vorbestimmten Zeitspannen und des Werts der entsprechenden Zeitspannen des örtlich erzeugten Signals, um eine genaue Laufzeit zu bestimmen und um dadurch den Abstand des Empfängersystems (10) vom Satelliten zu bestimmen.

7. Verfahren nach Anspruch 6, bei dem der Schritt des Steuerns der Phase des internen Spread-Spektrum-Signals durch eine digitale Schaltung ausgeführt wird.

8. Verfahren nach Anspruch 7, bei dem der Schritt des Bestimmens des mittleren Phasenfehlers von einer digitalen Schaltung ausgeführt wird.

9. Verfahren nach Anspruch 8, bei dem der Schritt des Einstellens der Phase des internen Spread-Spektrum-Signals durch einen numerisch gesteuerten Oszillator ausgeführt wird.

Revendications

1. Système récepteur (10) pour dériver la position dudit système récepteur à partir de signaux à spectre étalé diffusés par des satellites et formés de tops d'impulsions répétés, ledit système comprenant:
   - un moyen pour recevoir lesdits signaux à spectre étalé, (S_{IN})
   - un moyen (20) pour générer un signal à spectre étalé local (S_{PN}) s'appariant audit signal à spectre étalé d'un satellite et formé de tops d'impulsions répétés, ledit signal local s'appariant audit signal dudit satellite;
   - un moyen (12) pour corréler ledit signal à spectre étalé (S_{IN}) dudit satellite avec ledit signal généré localement (S_{PN}) et pour produire un signal de corrélation (S_1) lorsqu'une corrélation entre eux est établie;

     le système étant caractérisé en ce qu'il comprend:

- un moyen (16) sensible audit signal de corrélation dudit moyen de corrélation (12) pour dériver l'erreur de phase moyenne, entre ledit signal à spectre étalé (S_{IN}) dudit satellite et ledit signal généré localement (S_{PN}) sur des périodes de temps prédéterminées s'appariant aux intervalles de tops d'impulsions des signaux à spectre étalé, et afin de produire un signal d'erreur de phase moyenne;
- un moyen (18) sensible audit signal d'erreur de phase moyenne pour commander ledit moyen générant le signal à spectre étalé pour régler la phase dudit signal à spectre étalé généré localement afin de réduire ladite erreur de phase; et
- un moyen (24) pour dériver une valeur du temps de propagation de base dudit signal à spectre étalé mesuré entre une chronologie connue avec laquelle une impulsion de top est transmise par le satellite et la chronologie de l'impulsion correspondante dudit signal à spectre étalé généré localement, et pour corriger ladite valeur du temps de propagation de base, basé sur ladite valeur du signal d'erreur de phase moyenne, sur la valeur desdites périodes de temps prédéterminées et sur la valeur des périodes de temps correspondant du signal généré localement, afin de dériver un temps de propagation exact, et dériver ensuite la distance dudit système récepteur à partir dudit satellite.

2. Système récepteur selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit moyen (18) pour commander ledit moyen générant le signal à spectre étalé interne comprend un circuit numérique.

3. Système récepteur selon la revendication 2, dans lequel ledit moyen (16) pour dériver ladite erreur de phase moyenne comprend un circuit numérique.

4. Système récepteur selon la revendication 3 dans lequel ledit moyen (18) pour commander ledit moyen générant le signal à spectre étalé interne comprend un oscillateur commandé numériquement.

5. Système récepteur selon la revendication 4 qui comprend en outre un générateur d'horloge (18) et ledit moyen pour commander ledit moyen générant un signal à spectre étalé local commande la fréquence d'impulsion d'un signal d'horloge généré par ledit générateur d'horloge pour commander la phase dudit signal à spectre étalé généré localement.

6. Méthode pour dériver la position d'un système récepteur (10) à partir de signaux à spectre étalé transmis par des satellites et formés de tops d'impulsions répétés; ladite méthode comprenant les étapes de:
   - réception desdits signaux à spectre étalé (S_{IN});
   - génération d'un signal à spectre étalé local (S_{PN}) formé de tops d'impulsions répétés, ledit signal local s'appariant au signal à spectre étalé d'un satellite;
   - comparaison dudit signal à spectre étalé (S_{IN}) dudit satellite avec ledit signal généré localement (S_{PN}), et produisant un signal de corrélation (S_1) lorsque la corrélation entre eux est établie.

   la méthode étant caractérisée par les étapes suivantes de:
   - dérivation de l'erreur de phase moyenne, en réponse audit signal de corrélation, entre ledit signal à spectre étalé dudit satellite et ledit signal généré localement sur des périodes de temps prédéterminées s'appariant aux intervalles de tops d'impulsions des signaux à spectre étalé, et produisant un signal d'erreur de phase moyenne;
   - réglage de la phase dudit signal à spectre étalé généré localement afin de réduire ladite erreur de phase sur la base dudit signal d'erreur de phase; et
   - dérivation d'une valeur du temps de propagation de base dudit signal à spectre étalé mesuré entre la chronologie connue avec laquelle une impulsion de top donnée est transmise par ledit satellite et la chronologie de l'impulsion du top correspondant dudit signal à spectre étalé généré localement, et pour corriger ladite valeur de temps du propagation de base, basé sur ladite valeur du signal d'erreur de phase moyenne, sur la valeur desdites périodes de temps prédéterminées et sur la valeur des périodes de temps correspondantes du signal généré localement, afin de dériver un temps de propagation exact, et dériver ensuite la distance dudit système récepteur (10) à partir dudit satellite.

7. Méthode selon la revendication 6, dans laquelle ladite étape de commande de la phase dudit signal à spectre étalé interne est réalisée au moyen d'un circuit numérique.

8. Méthode selon la revendication 7 dans laquelle ladite étape de dérivation de ladite erreur de phase moyenne est réalisée par un circuit numérique.

9. Méthode selon la revendication 8, dans laquelle ladite étape de commande de la phase dudit signal à spectre étalé interne est réalisée par un oscillateur commandé numériquement.

FIG. 1

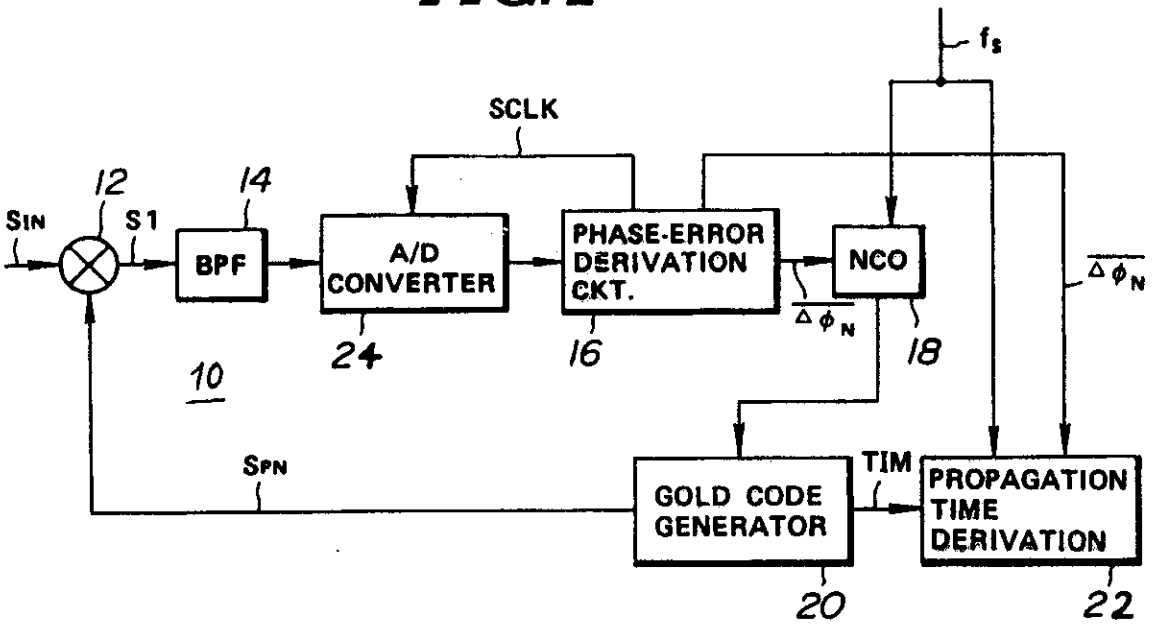
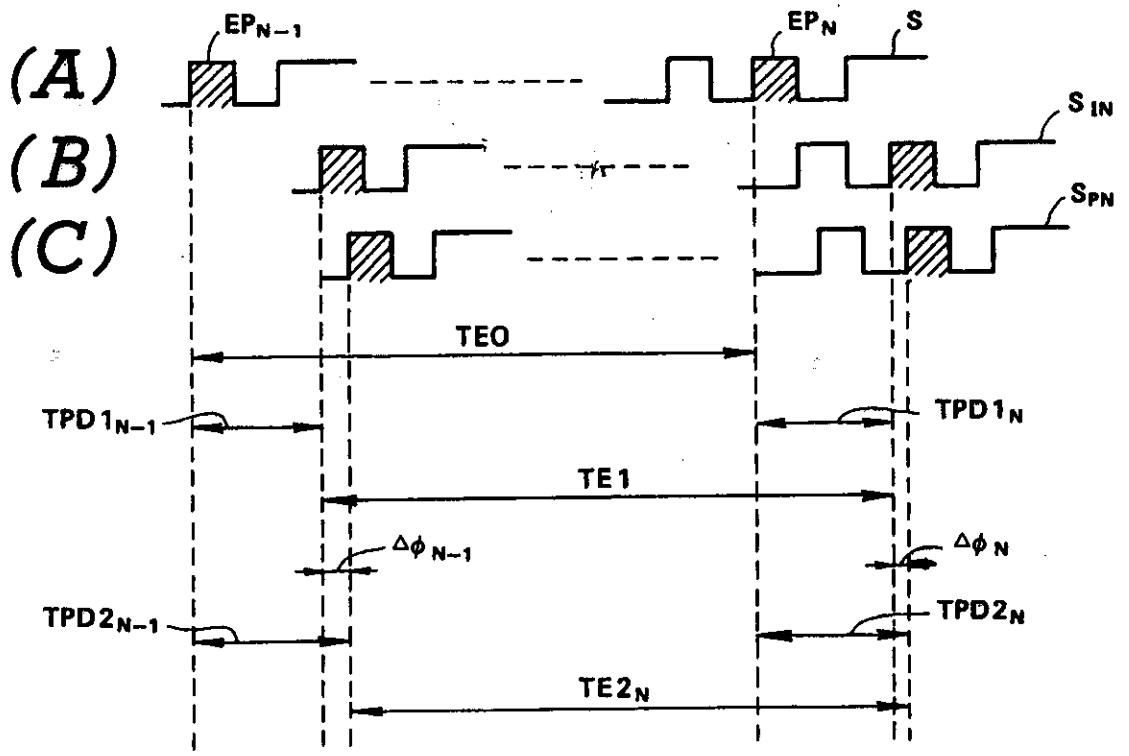

f_s
SCLK
12
14
S_{IN}
S1
BPF
A/D CONVERTER
PHASE-ERROR DERIVATION CKT.
NCO
$\overline{\Delta\phi_N}$
$\Delta\phi_N$
24
16
18
10
S_{PN}
GOLD CODE GENERATOR
TIM
PROPAGATION TIME DERIVATION
20
22

FIG. 2


(A)
(B)
(C)
EP_{N-1}
EP_N
S
S_{IN}
S_{PN}
TEO
$TPD1_{N-1}$
$TPD1_N$
TE1
$\Delta\phi_{N-1}$
$\Delta\phi_N$
$TPD2_{N-1}$
$TPD2_N$
$TE2_N$

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